

## Executive Summary

Updated 11/8/06

# COLUSA SUBREACH BACKGROUND REPORT



**Colusa Subreach Planning** (CSP) will develop an ecosystem restoration strategy for the Sacramento River floodway, between the unincorporated community of Princeton and the City of Colusa, in close coordination with landowners and other interested persons. This strategy will be integrated with the flood control system, public recreation and other land uses in the subreach. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF) have formed a partnership to conduct the planning program. Funding is provided by the California Bay Delta Authority (commonly referred to as CALFED); a joint effort of the State of California and the federal government to address the water supply and ecosystem restoration needs of California. The Primary Goal of Colusa Subreach Planning is to:

***Increase citizen stakeholder involvement in determining realistic conservation strategies and projects for protecting and restoring riparian vegetation along the Sacramento River, between River Miles 143.5 and 164.5, compatible with the flood control system and other economic and environmental uses of the floodplain***

Colusa Subreach Planning is grounded in the belief that, through good communication, information sharing and collaborative design, many of the existing concerns regarding the restoration of the riparian ecosystem along the Sacramento River can be resolved.

The Colusa Subreach Background Report is a basic information source for the subreach planning process. It provides a broad baseline information context for the consideration of the economic, social and ecosystem needs of the subreach. It is intended to be a resource for the Advisory Workgroup and other stakeholders involved in the planning process including local landowners, governments and organizations, recreation and conservation interests and agencies involved in the management of wildlife habitat and the flood control system. It is also intended to be used by SRCAF and TNC staff as a reference work and repository of information regarding the Colusa Subreach. This Report is designed to focus on information that will help the Advisory Workgroup and other stakeholders understand and evaluate subsequent plans for the conservation of wildlife habitat and other plans and reports that will be developed through CSP.

This Report includes six different types of information.

- Chapter I - Provides an overview of Colusa Subreach Planning, the funding source and the project partners.
- Chapter II - Describes the entire subreach in terms of land use, ownership and land use controls.
- Chapters III and IV - Describes the status of the Sacramento River ecosystem.
- Chapter V – Summarizes the existing economic setting and existing landowner concerns regarding habitat conservation
- Chapter VI Summarizes existing strategies to restore the Sacramento River ecosystem.
- Chapter VII - Describes the tracts that have been identified for potential riparian habitat restoration in the Subreach.

This Subreach Background Report is not intended to reach conclusions or determinations. It is a compilation of information, some preexisting and some newly-developed, that is intended to stimulate thought, discussion and ultimately understanding of ecosystem restoration opportunities in the Colusa Subreach.

## **A. Colusa Subreach Planning Overview**

Colusa Subreach Planning addresses a twenty-one mile section of the Sacramento River lying between the unincorporated community of Princeton and the City of Colusa. The planning area is located entirely inside of the flood control levees. It includes approximately 5,466 acres of land in both Glenn and Colusa Counties.

The Colusa Subreach has been greatly altered through water supply and flood control activities. Approximately ninety percent of the original riparian habitat adjoining the river has also been converted to other uses. These changes have contributed to the elimination of some wildlife species and the listing of other species as Threatened, Endangered and of Special Concern under state and federal Endangered Species Acts. At present, these special status species include 43 different anadromous fish, raptors, songbirds and other animals. In response, a wide range of private interests and public agencies have joined together in the effort to restore the riparian ecosystem to a healthy state and provide for viable populations of fish and wildlife.

CSP will develop strategies for the conservation of wildlife habitat and related flood control and land use considerations. The tasks included in Colusa Subreach Planning are summarized below.

**Coordination and Outreach** - SRCAF and TNC will manage an extensive and open public engagement effort that will focus on an Advisory Workgroup composed of the SRCAF representatives, local stakeholders and representatives of public agencies that manage property along the river. The Workgroup will identify issues and develop understanding of and solutions to those concerns as part of developing plans for restoration and related uses. The Advisory Workgroup will also review technical reports and products, proposed plans for restoration and related land uses for consistency with the goal and principles of the Sacramento River Conservation Area Handbook.

The Workgroup adopted the following mission statement in December of 2004.

***To cooperatively determine practical strategies for conservation and restoration of wildlife habitat within the Colusa Subreach that minimize adverse economic impacts, are compatible with agriculture and local community needs, integrate with recreation needs and protect the integrity of the flood control system.***

<b>Colusa Subreach Planning Advisory Workgroup</b>		
<b>Representation</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b><i>Steering Committee</i></b>		
SRCAF - Glenn Co. - Landowner	Don Anderson	Glenn County Farmer
SRCAF - Glenn Co. - Public Interest	Denny Bungarz	Glenn County Supervisor
SRCAF - Colusa Co. - Landowner	Ben Carter*	Colusa County Farmer
SRCAF Manager	Burt Bundy	SRCAF Manager, Farmer
SRCAF - Public Agency	Armand Gonzales	DFG Manager
SRCAF - Colusa Co. - Public Interest	Gary Evans*	Colusa County Supervisor
The Nature Conservancy	Dawit Zeleke	TNC Project Director
<b><i>Interest Representatives</i></b>		
Irrigation and Reclamation Districts	John Garner	PCGID Board Member, Farmer
Environmental Interests	Jay Dee Garr	Local Wildlife Consultant
Inner Levee Private Property Owners	Francis Hickel*	Colusa County Farmer
Recreation Interests	Pat Kittle*	Kittle's Outdoor
Business Interests	Ray Krause*	Ray's Bike Shop
Glenn County Government	Dan Obermeyer	Glenn Co. Planning & Pub. Works Director
City of Colusa	John Rogers*	Mayor of Colusa, Farmer
Agriculture Interests	Jeff Sutton*	FWA Executive Director
Colusa County Government	Jon Wrynski*	Colusa Co. Public Works Director
<b><i>Agency Representatives</i></b>		
State Department of Parks and Rec.	Mike Fehling	Supervising Ranger
California Bay Delta Authority	Rebecca Fris	CBDA staff
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Kelly Moroney	Asst. Refuge Manager
State Department of Fish and Game	Paul Raquel	Supervising Biologist
State Department of Water Resources	Annalena Bronson	Flood Management
* Resigned from the Workgroup in February 2006		

Outreach to landowners and other stakeholders will include public meetings, workshops, information presentations to local organizations, newsletters and a survey of landowners as shown in Figure 1. Additionally, a CSP website has been established within the SRCAF website at [www.sacramentoriver.ca.gov](http://www.sacramentoriver.ca.gov). It features CSP information, documents and notices regarding all public engagement events.

**Baseline Assessments** – Research will be conducted to compile and analyze the information base required to support planning of the restoration of riparian habitat, integrated land use and resource planning. These will include the Subreach Background Report, tract-specific baseline reports, small mammal distribution, cultural resources assessment and detailed topographic mapping of the entire Subreach. These and other CSP reports will be available for public review at the CSP website and at local libraries in Colusa, Princeton and Willows.



**Figure 1. Colusa Subreach Planning Public Engagement Plan**

**Modeling** - Hydraulic analysis of the existing capacity of the floodway and of the impacts of wildlife habitat restoration plans will be performed in order to ensure that projects do not compromise the integrity of the flood protection system.

**Focal Area Planning** - A master plan for expansion of the Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area and a recreation access plan for the entire subreach will be prepared. Wildlife habitat restoration plans will also be developed with the input of neighboring landowners and the Advisory Workgroup.

**Landowner Questions** - The Advisory Workgroup identified priority landowner questions and concerns to be researched to reduce uncertainty regarding future conservation activities and/or identify actions that will help resolve concerns. Studies include local fiscal and economic effects and pest and regulatory effects.

**Subreach Planning Report** - A final report will synthesize the results of CSP and define a strategy for future wildlife habitat restoration and related actions.

Colusa Subreach Planning is funded through the Ecosystem Restoration Program of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and the source of the funds is Proposition 204 which was approved by the voters of California on November 5, 1996. As a contractor and subcontractor, TNC and SRCAF are responsible to the California Bay-Delta Authority for management of CSP. CSP is scheduled to occur over a four-year term that is scheduled to end in April of 2008. The Advisory Workgroup will meet and other public outreach efforts will occur during each of the four years. The Colusa Subreach Planning schedule is shown on Figure 2.

## B. The Colusa Subreach

The two principal land uses in the Colusa Subreach are agriculture and riparian habitat. Together these two uses occupy approximately 98% of the 5466 acres of

Calendar Year	2004			2005				2006				2007				2008	
Quarter	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
<b>Task 1 - Public Outreach</b>																	
Advisory Workgroup																	
Landowner Surveys				LS												LS	
Newsletters					N				N				N				N
Public Meetings					PM					PM	PM			PM	PM		
Workshops							W		W				W				
<b>Task 2 - Baseline Assessments</b>																	
Subreach Background Report																	
Cultural Resources																	
Tract-specific Baseline Data																	
Small Mammals Data																	
Topographic Mapping																	
<b>Task 3 - Modeling</b>																	
Hydraulic Analysis										PM	PM						PM
<b>Task 4 - Focal Area Plans</b>																	
Recreation Plans																	PM
Restoration Plans																	PM
<b>Task 5 - Landowner Questions</b>																	
Flood Capacity Analysis																	PM
Pest and Regulatory Effects																	PM
Fiscal and Economic Effects																	
<b>Task 6 - Project Management</b>																	
Subreach Planning Report																	PM

Figure 2. Colusa Subreach Planning Schedule

In the Subreach. Small portions of the planning area, totaling less than two percent of the area, are devoted to flood control water supply, recreation and miscellaneous open areas. Table 1 describes the mix of land use and Figure 3 depicts the location of different land uses in the Subreach. The remaining habitat area inside of the levees represents less about five percent of the original area of riparian habitat that existed along the river between Princeton and Colusa.

Table 1. Land Use in the Colusa Subreach

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total Area
Agriculture – Orchard	1204	22%
Agriculture – Row Crops or Fallow	1163	21%
Other Open Area	23	0.4%
Riparian Habitat	3031	55%
Flood Control	25	0.5%
Water Supply	5	0.1%
Recreation	14	0.3%
Residential	1	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5466 acres</b>	

Approximately 78% of the land in the Colusa Subreach is in private ownership and about 22% of the land is in public ownership. The percentage of private ownership is slightly greater than that in the Red Bluff to Colusa portion of the SRCA where approximately 72% is privately owned and 28% is publicly owned. The Private

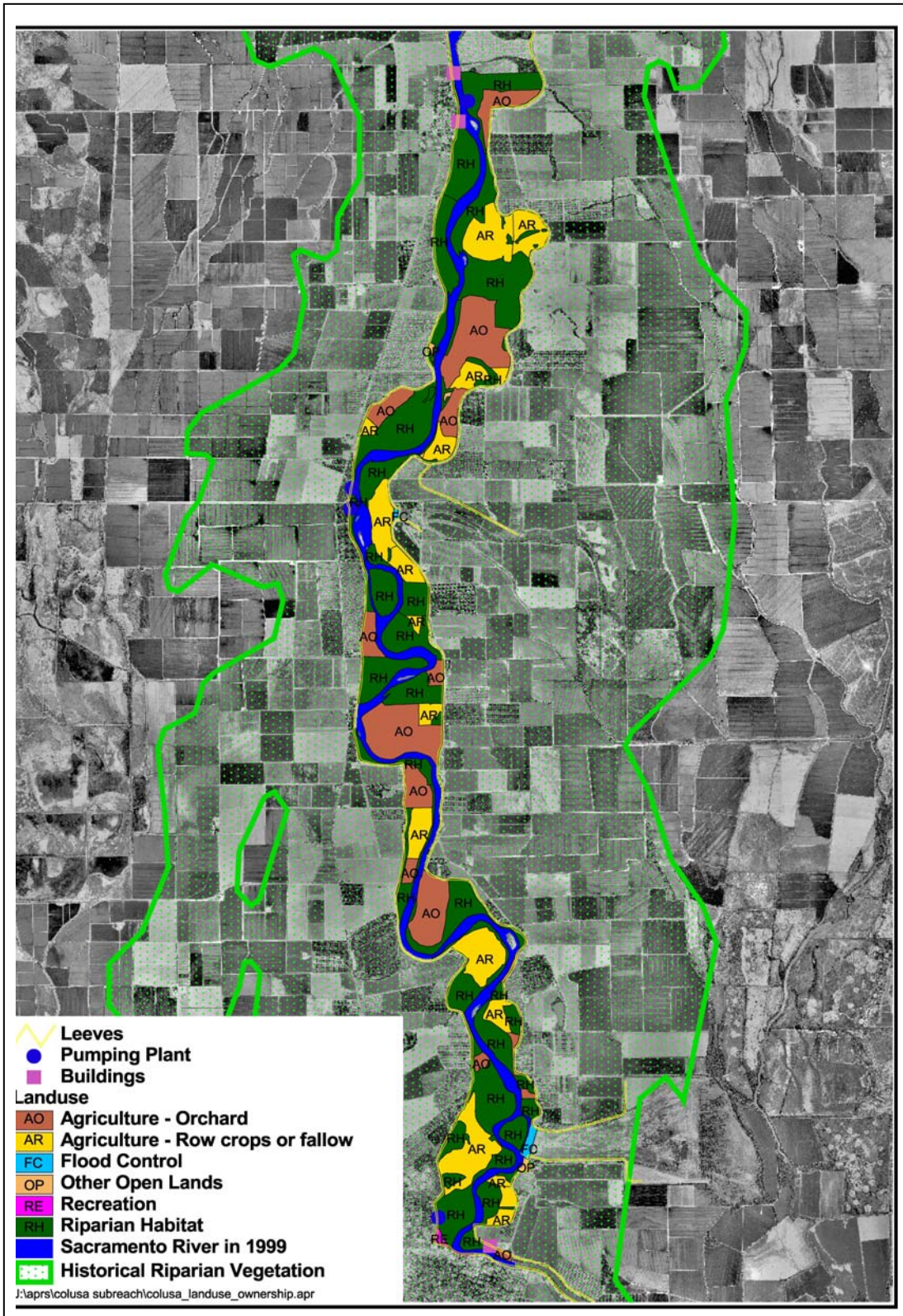


Figure 3. Existing Land Use in the Colusa Subreach

category includes 3,884 acres owned by 78 different owners, of which, 56% is devoted to agriculture, 44% is in riparian habitat and less than one percent is in other miscellaneous uses. A second category of private ownership is Private Conservation, which represents the 369 acres owned by The Nature Conservancy. This land is evenly divided between habitat and agriculture.

Public ownership totals approximately 1,214 acres and it is composed of 95% habitat and 5% other uses including recreation, water supply and flood control. Public agencies managing land within the Subreach include four local governments, three State agencies and one federal agency. Of this area, approximately 1000 acres are open to public recreation use. Lands owned by the public are described in Table 2 and shown in Figure 4.

**Table 2. Public Lands in the Colusa Subreach**

<b>Public Agency</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>	<b>Acres</b>
City of Colusa	1	1
County of Colusa	2	11
Rec. District 1004	1	4
Maxwell Irrigation. District	1	<1
CA Dept. of Fish and Game	7	905
CA Dept. of Parks and /Recreation	1	95
Sac. & San Joaquin Drainage Dist.	1	161
US Bureau of Indian Affairs	1	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 sites</b>	<b>1214 acres</b>

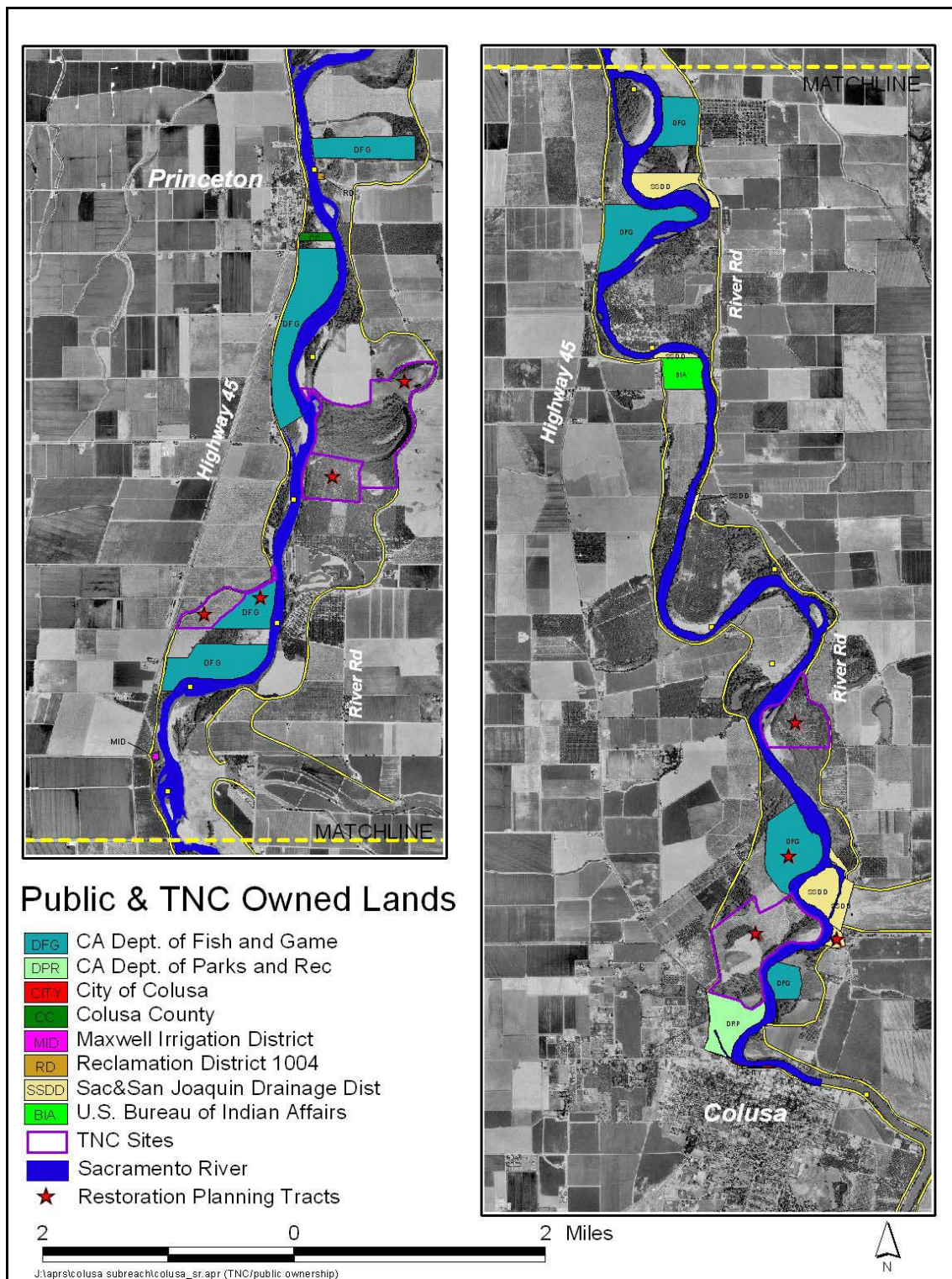
#### **D. Planning for Wildlife Habit Restoration**

Colusa Subreach Planning will include planning for wildlife habitat restoration on tracts that now have limited habitat value. Each site appears to have the potential to support native vegetation that would fill gaps in existing areas of wildlife habitat. The eight tracts are owned by the public or by TNC. They are all located adjoining or in close proximity to the river, inside of the levee system. On two of the tracts, the agricultural use has been discontinued. The remaining six tracts still retain some agricultural use. All restoration plans will be designed and tested to ensure compatibility with the flood control system. Table 3 describes the eight tracts and Figure 4 incorporates the locations of the potential restoration sites.

**Table 3. Restoration Tract Description**

<b>Tract</b>	<b>Total Area</b>	<b>Restoration Area</b>	<b>River Mile</b>	<b>Existing Land Use</b>	<b>Owner</b>
Womble	307	58	RM 162L	Agriculture-annual row crops	TNC option
Jensen	105	83	RM 161L	Agriculture-walnut orchard	TNC
1000-acre Ranch	60	50	RM 160R	Agriculture-prune orchard	TNC
Stegeman	69	10	RM 160R	Fallow-former orchard	State / DFG
Boeger	129	55	RM 148L	Agriculture-annual row crops	TNC
Colusa-North	118	5	RM 147R	Fallow-former orchard	State / DFG
Ward	238	143	RM 145.5R	Agriculture-annual row crops	TNC
Cruise n'Tarry	10	10	RM 145.5L	Fallow-former marina	State/ DWR
<b>Total</b>	<b>1036 ac.</b>	<b>414 ac.</b>			

The planning of these restoration tracts will include meeting with adjacent landowners and review of draft restoration plans with the Advisory Workgroup and other interested persons.



**Figure 4. Lands Owned by the Public and TNC Including Restoration Planning Tracts**

**\*For further information about Colusa Subreach Planning contact:**

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Colusa Subreach Planning Website  
[www.sacramentoriver.ca.gov](http://www.sacramentoriver.ca.gov)  
\*click on Colusa Subreach Planning